EXHIBIT ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF BEST-SELLING TRAVEL WRITER ELEANOR EARLY -- A NATIVE OF NEWTON -- AT BC'S BURNS LIBRARY THROUGH JULY 31

CHESTNUT HILL, MA -- An historical exhibit focusing on the life and work of best-selling travel writer and journalist Eleanor Early -- a native of Newton, Mass. who frequently focused on New England in her works -- is currently on display at Boston College's John J. Burns Library. The free public exhibit, "And This is Eleanor Early!" will be on display on the main floor of Burns Library through July 31, 2006.

The exhibit includes publications, photographs and papers drawn from the library's Eleanor Early Collection. Among the items on display is Early's first and best-selling travel book, And This Is Boston!, first published in 1930. In addition to other travel books and her New England Cookbook, the exhibit includes manuscript items which provide biographical information; photographs, including a family photo and others from her time in the Caribbean, articles and publicity materials.

The image at left is likely related to the series of radio broadcasts Eleanor Early did in the spring of 1942 in wartime Washington. Photo by Hessler Studio, Washington, DC.

ABOUT ELEANOR EARLY

Born April 27, 1895 in Newton, Mass., Eleanor Early grew up and attended school in Wellesley. She later enrolled in a program for kindergarten teachers at Miss Wheelock's School (later Wheelock College) in Boston, from which she graduated in 1917. She preferred to be a journalist, however, and began working for Boston newspapers, first as a cub reporter who could not type, and then as a feature writer. In the mid and late 1920's, she was a freelance writer for the International New Service, and began to try her hand at writing fiction, first serialized in newspapers and later published as books.

While covering the Boston Braves spring training in Saint Petersburg, Florida, she had so many questions about Boston that she decided to write a book on it, leading to And This Is Boston! She reportedly wrote publishing company Houghton Mifflin with the first two chapters of the proposed book, and under contract turned out the rest of the volume in seven weeks.

New England topics continued to be a subject of Early's writing throughout the 1930's and beyond. She wrote And This Is Cape Cod! in 1936, which she later "redid" as Cape Cod Summer in 1949, by driving around the length of the Cape in an old Ford. She also wrote about Nantucket in An Island Patchwork (1941), gathered up some of her favorite stories in New England Sampler (1940) and covered the Adirondack Mountains of New York in Adirondack Tales (1939).
After discovering the Caribbean Islands early in her career as a journalist, Early returned often and lived for periods of time on various islands, most notably on Dominica, Haiti, Tortola, Trinidad and Tobago, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. This experience led to articles and her travel books *Ports of the Sun* (1937) and *Lands of Delight* (1939). For the former, a New York Times reviewer wrote that "she can write of these ports of the sun with the sure acquaintance and the effortlessness that helped make her New England guide books so delightful. . . ."

During World War II, Early wrote a series of articles for the King Features Syndicate on "Girls in Washington," and also hosted a radio program, each to advise the hundreds of women who had come to work for the government about how to get along in wartime Washington.

Early had enjoyed the culinary arts since she was given cooking utensils at age ten and baked bread at twelve to "please papa." She enjoyed cooking the foods of the places she visited and included the recipes in her travel books and articles. In *New England Cookbook* (1954), she published hundreds of her favorite New England recipes with background information on them.


In the later 1950's and 1960's, until her death in Boston on August 25, 1969, she wrote numerous articles for newspapers and magazines. She was a founding member of the Society of American Travel Writers.

The John J. Burns Library of Rare Books and Special Collections is named in memory of the Honorable John J. Burns, a distinguished alumnus of the class of 1921 who became the University's first "Friend of the Library" and one of its principal benefactors. It was dedicated in 1986, and today is home to more than 160,000 volumes, 15 million manuscripts and impressive holdings of artifacts, maps, paintings, photographs, ephemera and architectural records.

Through July 31, 2006: "And This Is Eleanor Early!," an historical exhibit of books, manuscripts, photographs, articles and publicity materials related to best-selling travel writer and journalist Eleanor Early, at The John J. Burns Library at Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, Mass. Free and open to the public. Hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or by appointment. Venue is handicapped accessible. For information call: 617-552-3282.

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